

Your guide to finding private accommodation

What happens if halls of residence accommodation is not available, is not suitable for your needs or you just want to live elsewhere? Here's your helpful guide to finding accommodation privately.

Let other students know you are looking for housemates or a room in a house

Join www.facebook.com/BUfindahousemate and make contact with other students looking for or offering rooms in private accommodation (click on the "Community" tab).

Start your search for houses, flats or rooms

There are many private **Letting Agents** in Bournemouth who can assist you with your search (conduct an internet search). [Gumtree](https://www.gumtree.com) and [SpareRoom](https://www.spareroom.com) are also useful sites for privately rented rooms/flats.

Our Accommodation Team are there to support you and can help you conduct your search. Email them – accommodation@bournemouth.ac.uk or call +44 (0)1202 969696

Many students choose to live in areas which are popular for students with most shared student housing located in Winton, Charminster, Ensbury Park, Springbourne, Boscombe, Wallisdown – all are well served by regular bus services to and from campuses (every 15 – 30 minutes). The private student halls of residences are mainly located in the Lansdowne.

It is sensible to arrange viewings before you make your decision and we have provided you with some key things to ask.

Ask the important questions:

Location of property

Is the property in an area convenient for your studies and social life?

Is the property within a suitable distance to local public transport and local amenities?

Would you feel sufficiently safe walking around the area during the day or in the evening?

External features

Does the exterior of the property appear well maintained? This would include no broken guttering, no damage to the roof e.g. missing roof tiles, no cracked window panes and solid front and back doors

Are all boundary walls in good condition e.g. no missing sections or crumbling bricks?

Are there sufficient bins for the property, including recycling?

Is the garden well maintained and clear of any rubbish?

Is the landlord/agent clear about who is responsible for the maintenance of the garden?

Internal features

Is there sufficient communal living space?

Do bedroom sizes meet your expectations and needs?

Does the interior of the property appear well maintained? This includes no signs of damp, décor and furniture in good condition, no outstanding issues of disrepair and all the appliances and lights work (try them)

- Are there enough facilities (e.g. kitchen appliances and cupboard space, bathrooms) for the number of tenants?
- Is there sufficient heating (radiators etc.) throughout the property and does the heating system work?
- Do the appliances and taps work?
- Is there hot water?
- Where is the water, gas and electric meter?
- Do you know how to report maintenance?

Safety features

- Does the landlord possess a current gas safety certificate that has been provided by a Safe Gas registered engineering within the past 12 months? You can check this at: www.gassaferegister.co.uk
- Does the property have working smoke and carbon-monoxide alarms?
- Are plug sockets free from cracks and other damage?
- Are there sufficient plug sockets in each room in the property?
- Ask the Agent/Landlord if the property requires a HMO license (if property is five people or more)?

Security features

- Are all windows lockable and do they have keys that work?
- Are there suitable strong locks on front and back doors?

Your landlord

- Ask if the landlord or letting agency is part of an approved redress scheme in case things go wrong?
- Do you know who the landlord is if it is different from the agent?

- Will you receive the landlord's full contact name and address?

Money

- A room in a private hall of residence will cost approx. £150-£180 p/wk (all bills included). A room in a shared student house will cost approx. £380-£480 p/month (bills not included). If you are a couple or have a family expect to pay approx. £1,000-£1,350 p/month (bills not included).
- Have you compared rent levels of other properties of a similar size?
- The landlord must register the security deposit with a registered Deposits Protection Scheme (DPS) scheme. Will they provide details of which scheme they use to protect your money?
- Do you know when rent payments are due?
- If you are renting as a group, will you be on a joint or on individual contracts?
- If on a joint contract, do you understand the impact of having joint liability? All people named on the tenancy agreement have **equal** responsibility for the terms of the contract including rent (i.e. if one person leaves the others could potentially have the responsibility to pay their share). If in doubt, then ask the landlord or contact [SUBU Advice](#) for guidance.
- Do you know if there is anything else included within the rent e.g. utility bills, broadband etc?
- Do you know who the utility (gas, electric, water) suppliers are for the property are and how to set up your own accounts when you move in?
- How much is the deposit?

Don't be afraid to ask lots of questions – that's what the agent/landlord is there for



Get your finances in place

Remember to calculate the total contract cost, i.e. multiply the weekly or monthly costs by the length of the contract.

If you receive a student maintenance loan it will usually be in place within a few days of enrolment but make sure you have funds available in case of a delay. If you are self-funded then ensure you have enough to cover the cost of the accommodation.

You will most likely be expected to pay your rent monthly, usually on a fixed-date. Unless your rent has bills included you will need to factor in these costs. Typically, in a shared house of 4, you can expect to pay (per month):

- Gas & electricity – approximately £40–60 each*
- Water & sewerage – approximately £15 each
- TV Licence – approximately £4 each
- Internet – approximately £10 each
- Council tax – you will receive council tax exemption as a fulltime student.

**Energy costs are high in the UK and these amounts could go up in October 2022*

On top of these costs you will also need money to buy food, drink, transport and entertainment so check your budget to ensure you have enough. SaveTheStudent.org has a useful online budget calculator you can use for this.



Secure your property

Remember that you are signing a legal contract for your accommodation, so you will be held liable. Be sure to read through the terms & conditions to know what you're signing-up to. If you are not sure about anything then [contact your SUBU Advice team](#) who will be happy to look at it for you.

Note when your contract starts and ends. Contracts are typically 10 – 11 months.

You might also need to provide a Guarantor that is a named person who will be legally responsible for any rent arrears that arise. If you from outside of the UK and/or don't have a UK based guarantor, there are companies who offer this service. Just conduct an internet search for "student guarantor schemes" for details.



Pay your deposit

Once you have confirmed you wish to go-ahead with the property you have selected, you might need to pay a deposit (typically 4-6 weeks rent) and the first month's rent. At this point, you should ensure your deposit is held in a secure location, such as the [Deposit Protection Scheme](#). This means your money is safe.

Don't forget to organise contents insurance to cover your personal belongings.



Arriving and start of term

Academic term starts on Monday 19 September 2022 so make sure you are able to collect your keys and move in before this date. We have created a [series of accommodation videos](#) to help you with what to do before and during your first few weeks.

You'll receive further updates about your enrolment and social activities to get involved in within your Welcome Pack so keep checking your emails for these updates.

Further useful information:

[BU Renting Privately](#)

[Accommodation for Students with Families](#)

[Housing \(subu.org.uk\)](http://Housing.subu.org.uk)